



## **A system-wide working group on civic engagement and service-learning: How, why, and so what?**

Suzanne Cashman, Professor and Director of Community Health, University of Massachusetts Medical School [suzanne.cashman@umassmed.edu]

Joan Arches, Associate Professor, University of Massachusetts Boston [joan.arches@umassb.edu]

Carol Soules, Associate Director, Civic Engagement & Service-Learning, University of Massachusetts Amherst [csoules@acad.umass.edu]

John Reiff, Director, Civic Engagement and Service-Learning, University of Massachusetts Amherst [jreiff.cesl@umass.edu]

Robin Toof, Director, Center for Family, Work, and Community, University of Massachusetts Lowell [robin\_toof@uml.edu]

Eileen Cavanaugh, Executive Director, Holyoke Boys & Girls Club [ECavanaugh@hbgc.org]

Ellen Correa, doctoral candidate, University of Massachusetts Amherst [ecorrea@comm.umass.edu]

Nicole Nemec, Learn and Serve Program Manager, University of Massachusetts Amherst [nnemec@honors.umass.edu]

**Keywords:** Model of collaboration, multi-campus initiative, civic engagement, student impact, community impact

**Conference track:** Higher education student outcomes

**Format:** Team inquiry presentation

## Summary

Authors present and discuss results of a five-campus model of collaboration to grow and support civic engagement and service-learning throughout a state university system. The model of collaboration was developed in response to the Corporation for National and Community Service's (CNCS) Learn and Serve Initiative. Roles and contributions of faculty, service-learning coordinators, students, staff members, and community partners and service users will be highlighted in this presentation. Student data that examine the impact community placements have had on: a) students' sense of commitment to community issues, b) ability to solve social problems, c) awareness of diversity issues and other's points of view, and d) intended plans to stay in school were aggregated from four of the five campuses (instrument was not relevant to one); response rates increased over time. Preliminary analysis indicates service-learning and civic engagement are improving student retention and having a positive impact on youth in tutoring programs. In addition, the collaboration efforts resulted in increased and strengthened service-learning programs.

Underpinning the initiative is the framework of a strong five-campus working group on civic engagement. The multiple voices represented by this group have resulted in producing a host of creative ideas, a commitment to support one another in implementation, and a presence at the university-wide level.

A system wide approach to strengthening and growing service-learning across a university has an impact that will be lasting for the campuses, the communities, the students, and the faculty. With our emphasis on servicing-learning and civic engagement, we address the institutional and student need for high impact pedagogies to increase student retention and success and speak to the AAC&U's *Crucible Moment* report.

## References

- Carey, K. (2005). *One step from the finish line*. Retrieved from: [http://www.edtrust.org/sites/edtrust.org/files/publications/files/one\\_step\\_from.pdf](http://www.edtrust.org/sites/edtrust.org/files/publications/files/one_step_from.pdf)
- Eyler, J. (2000). What do we most need to know about the impact of service learning on student learning [Special issue]? *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning, Fall*, 11–17.
- Kuh, G. D. (2008). *High-impact educational practices. What they are, who has access to them, and why they matter*. Washington, DC: Association of American Colleges and Universities
- Kuh, G. D., Kinzie, J., Cruce, T., Shoup, R., & Gonyea, R. M. (2007). *Connecting the dots: Multi-faceted analyses of the relationships between student engagement results from the NSSE, and the institutional practices and conditions that foster student success*. Bloomington, IN: Center for Postsecondary Research. Retrieved from: [http://www.nsse.iub.edu/pdf/Connecting\\_the\\_Dots\\_Report.pdf](http://www.nsse.iub.edu/pdf/Connecting_the_Dots_Report.pdf).
- Mitchell, T. D., & Donahue, D. M. (2009). "I do more service in this class than I ever do at my site": Paying attention to the reflections of students of color in service-learning. In J. Strait and M. Lima (Ed.), *The future of service learning: New solutions for sustaining and improving practice* (pp. 172-190). Sterling, VA: Stylus.
- The National Task Force on Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement. (2012). *A crucible moment: College learning and democracy's future*. Washington, DC: Association of American Colleges and Universities.

Novick, S., Seider, S., & Huguley, J. (2011). Engaging college students from diverse backgrounds in community service learning. *Journal of College & Character*, 12(1), 1–8.